

Chapter III–2: *How Dagbamba Sow Their Farms*

As for the sweetness of our farming, and as I am telling you how we farm, I think it is yams that are the strongest, because in our farming, all our strength lies on the yams. And so today we will enter into yams because it is yams that have the most strength in our farming. If you farm and you don't farm yams, it is not sweet. In Dagbon here, yams have got a lot of profit for us. As you have entered Dagbon, you are not farming, but you know that yams help those who farm and those who don't farm. There is someone who only eats *fufu* and doesn't know how to eat *sayim*. And so in our Dagbon farming, all the strength lies on yams. And yams have also got some hard work. In Dagbon, when we are going to farm yams, we farm three times, because we clear the land, and we make the yam mounds, and then we sow the seeds. And as we farm, we don't farm only one thing in the farm. I think that with us Dagbamba, when we want to start farming, we farm yams first, and what is following is that we will farm corn, and the corn might grow first before the yams. What is following again is to sow red guinea corn. We mix it with cowpeas and sow in the farm. After guinea corn, what follows is millet. And what is after millet is bambara beans, because bambara beans have a lot of work in Dagbon.

If our typical Dagbamba want to start farming, they get a place we call *narga*, a place where nobody has farmed before. We call it two names. It is also called *taṅkurli*. It is an old talk. It is very old Dagbamba who know it like that, not young ones. When Dagbamba farmers are going to farm yams, they will start by plotting the area. The place where there are yams, that is what they call *boɣu*, a yam farm. And the area that is good to farm yams, we call it *nyutam*. And so when they want to start, they say they are going to clear the *nyutam*. Listen well: I want to show you and you will know. Let's say the area is bush, and there is grass. You start in the middle, and you take your hoe and remove the grass to the other end. That first line you make is called *vayli*. When you have cleared the *vayli*, you come back to where you started and you farm to the side, let's say, to your right. You will be extending it and going. And as you farm more and open it, you reach a certain length, and you will say you have cleared *zalli*. This *zalli* is our acre. Then you come back to where you started the *vayli* the first time, and you will take it to the other side again. And you will say you have cleared the *zalli* again. That is two acres. And so the area you farm is *nyutam*, and clearing the *vayli* and *zalli* is the way you separate it. If that is your extent, you will leave it and put the end of your farm there.

If you are a householder and you have young men, and they can farm, when you finish clearing the land, you will get a cock and a male goat. It is not by force that you get the goat, but they have finished with your farm and your heart is white. And you will buy fish and add, and bring yams and add. You will give all to women to cook. On that day, every child in your house will eat food and meat and be satisfied. And you will send food to the farm, and the farmers will eat and leave some. And according to our custom, if they don't pound yams and make food to eat, the farm will not do well. And so the food they have left, they will bury it in the farm. As they have put food in the farm, it means that the food is coming to give you food. And so a Dagbana does not farm with hunger. And by that time you have finished what we call nyutam, and it shows that you have dug the bush and the grass and left it down on your plot, and the plot is cleared.

And as you have left it like that, when the moon dies, the ground is ready, because where the grass has lain, there is moisture under, and it can bring forth. At that time you will say that they should make *vuylaa*, that is, they should make ridges for yam mounds. You will get one person whose waist does not turn, someone who can make the ridges straight. He will start and farm from where you farmed the first time when you started and made the *vayli*, and he will make a ridge there. And then you will start from that ridge and move to the side making ridges. And we call an acre of yams *nakpaa*, and the *nakpaa* is where the *zalli* was before you made the ridges and mounds on it: as you make the ridges, you go one *nakpaa* on each side. The grass you have left, in the evening you will burn it on the ground where you are going to farm. When it's daybreak and you come, you and your young men will start making the mounds. When you come to make the mounds, one acre can be two thousand yam mounds. Someone will get one thousand yam mounds in one acre. If it is five days to finish the mounds, then you have finished. Some people start making their mounds and they farm for one month, because it is not all people who farm only two acres. Some farm ten acres; someone who is strong can farm like that. And the day when you finish the mounds, how you and your people ate when you started clearing the land, that is how you will all eat on the day you finish farming the mounds.

And then you come and sit, and you will prepare yam seeds. If you want, you can go and buy them, or if you want, you can get the yam seeds from the old mounds where you removed yams the year before. When you dig yams, you don't cut the roots and the leaves; if you do that, the yam will die. When you remove a yam from the mound, you take dirt and press it to cover the mound, and you will leave the green part standing. Going to one week, when you come and stand by the mound, you will see that it has cracked, and it is going to grow another yam.

The small one that is coming out, you dig and remove it. One mound can give you four or five seeds, and that is what we do to get yam seeds. Sometimes the yam seed will be about a foot long, and you can take a knife and divide it. You divide some into six, some four, some two. If the mounds are two thousand, you can cut about ten thousand yam seeds.

When you get the yam seeds, you go to the farm. The time you are going to sow yams is when the wind blows: you sow yams when the harmattan winds begin. The time the wind is blowing, the yam won't die, but what the yam doesn't want is for you to plant it during the warm season. Yam takes seven months, and so when you sow it during wind, getting to the warm season, you will see that it has grown. Some yams take longer than that, and others too won't reach seven months. It all comes from the soil where you have made your farm.

And again, how the yam will grow comes from the way you have sown it. As we farm yams, everybody has got the sense that he uses to make his farm. As I am sitting, I farm, and if I am going to sow yams, I take my hoe and I cut on top of the mound. As I have cut it with the hoe, I still hold the hoe and I press my yam into the mound, and I take the dirt in the hoe and I press it back. Then I take the hoe and I dig some wet dirt and I put it on top and press it. When you sow like this, the yam will not sleep in the mound. In a short time you will see it begin to come out. There is somebody who will use a stick to dig the mound, and then he will take his hand and dig and plant the seed: the yam seed will be under the mound too far, and it will be difficult for it to come out. And so someone whose hand grows yams quickly is there. The one whose hand grows yams fast, when he plants in the harmattan season, going to forty days, you will see the yams coming out; the one whose hand does not grow yams quickly, it will be going to sixty days. The one whose hand is faster shows that he has patience and knows how to grow yams well. And that is why I say everybody has got his sense in farming. Someone can be in the farm for a hundred years, and he will not know what sense he will use to farm well. And someone can come and learn it in two or four years, and he will know it more than his fellow friend.

And again, how the yams will grow is also coming from the type of yam you sow. There are many different types of yams. The yam that is our first is *larbako*; that is the yam which is sweeter than all the other yams in Dagbon, and it is also the one which grows quickly. And the one that follows *larbako* is *kpino*; *kpino* is the one with the big head. After *kpino* we have many other types: *liilia*, *kan̄gbariŋga*, *baayerɛ*, *dandiɣu*, *chenchito*, *ziɣlangbo*, *kpagoo*, *chamba*, *kulkulga*, *fuyɣla*, *dakpam*, *gun̄gun̄salli*, *kpringa*, *kpaasajo*, and they are all there. *Kpinokɔŋa* is another one: we call leprosy *ɔŋa*, and if you sow this yam and it germinates,

the leaves are very, very short, and so it is like how a leper's fingers are. There is one we call *warlana*, horse testicles, because when you dig it, it is black and just looks like the testicles of a horse. Another one is *gunḡunḡkpili*, and it is like a ball about the size of two closed hands. There is *baameyu*, and that one is very long and thin, and it goes far under the ground. *Frigima* is there, and it is not in the ground but on the branches. *Nyuwuyu*, or water yam, is very good for many foods. The one that expands the farm is *kpabo*, because if you sow one in a mound, it can become six, and all will be about the thickness of my forearm. And so if you have this one, your farm increases. As for *fuḡla*, it is short like from my hand to my wrist, and it is not good for roasting, but it's good for pounding. That one increases the farm even more, and some Dagbamba are afraid to sow it in their farms. If you sow one hundred this year, if it wants to worry you, the next year you will get about one thousand. In our way of living, some Dagbamba say that if you are a farmer and your farm is increasing too much, it means there is a funeral behind it. And so they say that the only people who can sow this *fuḡla* are old people who don't mind whether they die or not. It's a belief, and I don't follow it, but one time I put it in my farm, and it increased so much that I was afraid. These are the types of yams I can count for you just now, and there are others. If you go to ask another farmer who knows yams, he will show you some other types again. But you should know that how we call the yams, they have different names, and people on some other towns call them differently.

As we farm many types of yams, there is somebody who can farm from the time he is a young man up till his old age, and he will not farm all of them. Somebody will farm, and he will sow *larbako*, *kpino*, *chenchito*, *kpringa*, *ziḡlangbo*, and *kpabo*. Somebody who is a very good farmer, and he can farm throughout the year, he will farm like that. At that time, he can say that he has farmed all the yams, and if he doesn't farm the ones I called, he won't mind. When you farm different ones, you don't mix them on the same farm: you will clear many areas and put one type in each place. When you dig yams, you don't want to leave any, and as they don't grow at the same time, if you mix them, you won't be able to clear the whole farm. If the yams are not new and wet, you can store some under a tree at the farm, and you will get anthills or thorns and put around them to protect them from animals like cows or goats. These are the yams you are going to use for yam seeds the next year. At someone's farm, you can see about six types of yams stored. As you are farming, you are farming for eating and for selling. If you want to sell yams during the rainy season, you will sow *larbako*, *kpino*, and *chenchito*. You will sell in the rainy season and getting into the dry season, and a time will come when you won't have yams to eat. You will dig all

the yams and sell, because the ones that remain, if you wait to dig them, they will be useless. And the next year you will take sense and farm, and you will get other types and add. And this is why we sow different types of yams.

When you sow the yam seeds, and you finish sowing, if you have children, you will let the children take sickles and cut some leaves and grass. We call the leaves *nyubuyri*. You take the leaves and put them on top of the mounds, and you get some dirt and put it on top of the leaves. You don't let your hand get to where the yam is; you just put the leaves and the dirt and press it a little. When you do that, it will help the yam to grow well. And if your farm is near the town, as there are animals like cows which can spoil the yam mounds, and if you know that the animals will get inside the farm and spoil the yam mounds, you will get thorns and put them around the farm. Or you will get corn stalks and weave them. But if your farm is far from the town, you won't have to do that. And then you will come home and leave the yams in the farm.

When you sow your farm like this and you have covered and protected it, from forty days going to sixty days, the new plants will come out. Then you will go and cut trees to make sticks we call *nyusari*, and you will put the sticks in the yam mounds. You take the part of the yam that is coming out and put it on the stick and coil it round. If the yam mounds are ten thousand, this is what you will do to all of them. If you don't put the sticks, the yams will grow, but they won't grow well. And so it's just like if someone is nice: when it's daybreak he will bathe and make himself fine, and at that time you see that he has become more beautiful. And so this is what we do to yams. Getting to five months, when the rains come, if the rain is falling coolly and does not disturb the yams, you will see that the yam mounds will crack, and you will know that the new yams are coming. And you will go and repair the farm, that is, you will weed it. And so the farming of yams, it looks like how they take care of a new-born baby. You cannot get someone to farm yams for you. You farm it and sow it, and you come and cut leaves and cover it, and come and cut sticks, and all of this hard work I've been telling you, if you don't do it, your yams will not grow well.

By that time, the place where you made your mounds last year, the place from which you removed the old yams, you will go and make another farm there. That is the second year you are farming there. And the place where yams have grown and come out and been removed, we call it *batandali*. When the rains begin, you will go and sow corn in the *batandali*. When you want to sow corn, if your young men are not plenty, you will call people. In the evening, your child will go and squat in front of an elder from another house, and he will say, "My father says that on the Tolon market day, you should come and help him farm."

And the elder will reply, “All right. God should send us to that day.” When that day reaches, everybody will be coming with his hoe. The women in your house will take corn and pound it and make what we call *kukɔnyina*, porridge with teeth. As people are coming to the farm, the women will take the porridge with teeth and follow their steps, and they will put it down in the farm and return home. And they will cook food again, and they will come together and carry the food and send it to the farmers.

As these people have gone to the farm, they will say they have gone to spread *batandali*. Where they have removed last year’s yams, they will push down the mounds and dig and hoe the ground to make it level. That is where they are going to farm and sow corn. When they finish hoeing it, they will get small boys. The old people will be walking on the farm printing their footsteps, and the small boys will come and sow two kernels of corn where the old people stepped, and be pushing the dirt with their feet and closing the holes. Only a child with sense can do this work. Some Dagbamba too use a stick called *shɛbli* to sow corn. If they farm today and they are not able to sow the corn, if rain falls, the ground will become hard again, and they cannot step to make holes for sowing: they have to use the stick. But if they farm the area and they try to use the stick at once, when they knock the ground with the stick and remove it, the dirt will come back and cover the hole. And so that is how they sow corn, and they will sow it until they finish. At that time you the farmer will get up to thank the people who have come to help you, and you will say, “My mother’s children, I greet you. God should not leave anyone alone. And so God should give us one mouth.” And that is all at that time.

When the corn grows to about two feet, you will tell your wives and young men that they should come and sow guinea corn. We also use this stick we call *shɛbli* to sow guinea corn. If the farm is large, those who will be making the holes will be about four, and those who are sowing will be following. As they are sowing guinea corn, some Dagbamba also mix it with cowpeas — *tuya* — in the same hole. The one whose heart wants will sow beans. And it has become three crops on the farm, because here is corn, here is guinea corn, here are beans. You have sown three crops in one farm. And the guinea corn and beans you mixed and put into one hole, they will not disturb one another. The beans will lie on the ground, and the guinea corn will get up and grow and leave it.

And then, after you have farmed like that and come back to your house, you will say that you are going to start another farming. You go to the farm where you have planted yams. By that time, the yam seeds which you planted in the yam mounds have done about five months. As it has rained and the new yams are

coming, you will plant bambara beans — *siŋkpila* — in the farm, and you will sow millet — *za*, too. You will push some of the dirt from the yam mounds and sow millet in the rows between the mounds, and you will sow bambara beans on the sides of the yam mounds. And they will not disturb each other. By that time, how many crops have you got in the farm? They are three crops: here are yams, here is millet, here are bambara beans. And also there are three other crops in the batandali. There are some people, when they farm like this, they say they are not satisfied. They will go and farm somewhere again. Someone will sow three crops again, and someone will sow only one crop. Someone will sow guinea corn. There is someone who will farm again and sow groundnuts, and he will come to get more than if he sowed corn again. Someone who wants to sow only corn and not add anything to it will get the corn plenty. And so the one who sows only one crop will get it plenty. In the olden days, that was how they were farming, and there was no hunger in Dagbon.

The time the guinea corn is growing to about two feet is when you will harvest the corn. Guinea corn takes seven months, but yellow corn is three months, and white corn is four months. We also have some corn in Dagbon we call *kawaanyia*; in fifty days you can remove it, and if it dries for about ten days, it will become food. This yellow *kawaanyia*: it grows fast, and that is our yellow Dagbamba corn. You have your corn and we have our corn. I have never heard them say this corn we farm came from some town. If it is any food, there are Europeans yams and we also have our yams. If you say that during the time of Naa Gbewaa, they had no time for farming because they were always fighting, I won't argue with you. I already told you that during the olden days, as they were not fighting for land, it shows that they didn't like farming, and it made hunger fall in Dagbon. But if you say we had no corn during the olden days, I will argue with you. We had corn a long time before the white men came here. And if the Dagbamba were not farming plenty, at least they were farming a little. And this *kawaanyia* was there. But if it is the three months corn and you harvest it, there will be two crops left in the farm, guinea corn and beans. By that time, the guinea corn will get what its heart wants, and you will see that it grows very high. And let's say, getting to the next year, this batandali where they sowed guinea corn, they will plant millet in that place. And if they want, they will mix beans with the millet, but the guinea corn will not enter it again. And someone is there, and he will farm guinea corn first, and the next year he will make a yam farm there. Where we have farmed guinea corn or corn and removed it, we call it *kaysoyu*. And so batandali is on the part of where you have removed yams, and *kaysoyu* is on the part of where you have cleared guinea corn. And so he has now come to plant yams in the *kaysoyu*, and so he will make *boyu* — a yam farm — there.

And so that is how Dagbamba farm. Have you heard it well? As we Dagbamba farm like that, it is three years. You farm yams. The next year you come to the same place and farm the batandali. It has become two years. If you want, you can sow again, and that is three years. When you farm three times like that, the food will have strength in the farm. At that time, if there is more land, you will change your farming place; you won't mind that place again. If there is no land, you will farm that place five times before you leave it. If the land is good, you can farm it more than three times, and the food will be growing. As you are farming and weeding, grass will not come and enter the farm, and nothing will kill the food. And if you are farming like that, if you see that there is good land somewhere, you will get that good land and farm there, too. And so some people farm land three times, and some farm five times, and some even more, and it is the land which shows whether you can farm it. But if it is our Dagbamba way of farming, the place where you farmed three times or five times, you will not farm there again. You will leave it for a few years before you come back, and we call it *kukɔɣu*, fallow land. And again, we call it *gbansɔɣu*, where you have farmed and left. If you will leave it for more than ten years before you come back, or even where your grandfathers were farming before, and you come to meet it, you call it *gbansɔɣu*, or *kukɔɣu*. Such land, it has become new land again, and when you come back and farm it, you will see that the food will do well there.

And again, we Dagbamba, as we are farming like that, some people are not satisfied. The time you plant the corn, the time of the early rains, the new yams are not yet ready to be harvested, and the new corn is also not yet ready. If you want, when you plant corn, you will take a type of red beans we call *sanzi* and sow it inside the corn farm. It grows faster than all other foods: in thirty or forty days, it has become food, and it does a lot of work in Dagbon here. When you sow it and it grows, if women don't have soup, they can go and remove the leaves, and they will grind and sieve the leaves and cook. This soup is a green soup, and we call it *banli zieri*. If the Mossis are here, they remove the leaves and grind them, mix it with corn flour, and cook it and sell it. Even some Dagbamba sell it, too, and we call it *dagubiɛɣu*. And when this *sanzi* itself grows, you pick it and come, and you put it on the ground and get sticks and beat it. If you want, you put it in a mortar and pound it. And as the new food has not come out, it is this *sanzi* they cook for farmers to eat.

And again, if you farm and you farm yam mounds, and you sow guinea corn and it is growing, your farming then is what we call *gbankurgu*, that is, weeding: you will go and be weeding inside your farm. And if you like again, you will sow what we call *bungu*, that is, sesame. Getting to the end of the rainy season, that is

when you will sow it. It doesn't want too much rain, and sometimes you will even sow it and rain won't fall again, but it will still grow. It has got some very small flat seeds, like pepper or tomato seeds, and they use it for oil and many other things. They can grind it into a powder and spread it on food. It has something again: if you are a typical Dagbana and your wife gives birth, they will be collecting sesame, roasting it and grinding it into powder, and they will use it for cooking soup up to the naming day of the newborn child. A soup they will cook to be a very nice soup, they will put sesame inside, with other high foods. There is a type of melon seed we call *nili* which you can add to the sesame to make such soup. And so if you don't fear farming, the time you are weeding your farm, you will take sesame and sow it. You don't mix it with any other crop on the farm; it likes its own place. There is some land with tall grasses we call *worgu*. What we learned from the time we were children and growing up, this *worgu* is meant for sesame, millet or guinea corn. And so you will clear some land and sow sesame there. Some people farm sesame like that. And some people make their yam mounds early, when it is not yet time for sowing yams, and they plant the sesame first. It will grow and you will remove it before you sow the yams. It is not heavy, and when they sow it, they sow it with dirt. If you don't mix it with dirt before you spread it, wind will blow it. You have to take time in sowing it, because if the seeds or the dirt you have mixed it with get into your eyes, no matter who you are, you will become blind. And as you have sown it, your farm will be increasing.

I have told you that if you have farmed yam mounds, when it rains, the yam mounds will crack, and you will know that the new yams are coming. When the new yams are matured, the traditional Dagbamba have some talk inside it. Those who are truly typical Dagbamba, they have a medicine called *Jebuni*, and it is protecting them. It is a housegod, and so it's like the *Yabyili* you have been going to at Tongo, only it is everywhere in Dagbon. Our typical Dagbamba sacrifice to it. Even sometimes they take the name *Jebuni* to call human beings. If you go to the house of a typical Dagbana, this *Jebuni* is for the householder. Anyone who has *Jebuni*, he knows what it does, but I know it to be a pot. And so, when the new yams come out, a typical Dagbana has no way to go out, and he will not go anywhere. And we say, "He has not yet shown it to his old thing," because when the new yams come out, before he does anything, he has to take new yams to give to his old thing, that is, his medicine. Those who are farmers and they have *Jebuni*, sometimes they even send to this Tamale to get yams, because the yams from this town grow quickly. When the new yams are coming, and they are coming to be matured, a typical Dagbana will take some and let them cook the

yams. And he will take the cooked yams inside and paste it on the pot, and he will say, “My grandfather, get and taste new yam.” And then he too will eat, and by then he has a way to go anywhere.

And when the new yams come out, the farmer will be waiting. Going to one month or forty days, the yams will mature to about the length of my forearm. At that time he will gather his family. Even his daughters who are in the houses of their husbands will say, “My father is going to eat yams, and he is calling me,” and they will come. When they assemble, they will go and dig the yams from the farm, and it is the women who will take the yams and come. On that day, if they dig yams and bring them and you see, fear will catch you. You will be surprised. The yams will be plenty.

That is the day of eating yams, and it is a food we call *sakoro* that they will pound and eat, because *sakoro* is the work of yams. Actually, nowadays we also call it *fufu*; that is how the Ashantis call it, and all over Ghana people call it *fufu*, but its real Dagbani name is *sakoro*. If they are going to make *fufu*, the women who brought the yams will get knives and peel all the skins, and they will put the yams down and be cutting them into pieces. If it is the day of eating yams, they will put about four pots on fire, and they will cut the yams and put in the pots until the yams are boiled. There is something we call *karo*; it is a woven mat, and it is what we use to cover our doors. They will put the *karo* on the ground, and they will remove the yams from the pots and put the yams on the *karo* and spread them. The wind will blow the yams for a few minutes. And they will collect them and put them into pans. Because many of the family people have come, they will divide the women. Some houses can have about three mortars. Six women will stand at one mortar, and another six at another mortar. If they are not many, they will stand four-four or three-three. They will be removing the yams from the pans and putting into the mortars, and the women will take pounding sticks and be breaking the yams. As they are breaking the yams, the yams will spread, and at that time they will start pounding, and the yams will become smooth and soft. When they finish pounding, it has become *fufu*, and they will remove it and put it into bowls. Then they will take their hands and cut some away and put it into a clay bowl we call *laa*, and when they turn it in this clay bowl, it will become round. And then they will put the *fufu* into proper bowls. And they have cooked soup, and they will put soup on top of it. And that is *fufu*, or *sakoro*.

And that day, the householder, if he is someone who is strong, he will kill about two goats. As for the hens he will kill, they are many. Someone can get a cat and add. When they cook the meat and remove it from fire, it will fill many bowls. When they finish pounding the *fufu* and putting it into bowls, they will be

bringing the bowls to you the householder. You will come and be taking the meat and putting it on top of the food. And you will say, “Take this food and this meat and go and give to this housepeople, and tell them that today we are eating yams. Take this food and this meat and go and give to that housepeople.” They will be cutting the food and the meat and be giving to the townspeople, and the townspeople will say, “So-and-so is eating yams.” Sometimes someone’s bowls will be up to a hundred. Someone’s will be fifty. Someone’s will be thirty. Everyone and how strong he is. And when they finish sharing the food to the town, what has remained behind, that is the food of the housepeople. Have you ever seen someone eating food, and the food will collect his sense? On that day you will see it. Someone will eat, and all his sense will leave him, and he will just go and sleep.

Getting to a few days, the yams will become a bit hard, and they have become old yams. This yam, they will take it to make what we call *petepete*, mashed yam. When they take the yam, they will peel it as they peeled it the first time, and they will cut it into pieces and gather it. They will put it in a pot on the fire, and they will add water. They will grind pepper and what we call *kpalgu*. This *kpalgu* is what the Hausas call *dawadawa*, and it makes soup to be sweet. And they will buy fish. The one who has got the means will buy meat and add. And they will add salt. It is all in the pot, and they will pour the yams inside it, and get something and cover it. That is all. The fire will burn and the yams will be boiled. It will all mix, and it will become soft, and some of the yams that they cut will still be small pieces inside the food. They will remove it from the fire and be cutting it and putting into bowls. And it will cool a bit, and everyone will get his bowl. And this is another work of yams, and it is very, very sweet.

As I am showing you the work of yams, if you want again, you will let them peel the yams. And they will cut it into slices, and put it by itself in a pot on fire. The one who wants will take a little salt and add it. And they will buy oil, onions, pepper, tomatoes; the one who has means will buy meat. They will put the oil on fire and then mix the onions and everything in the oil, and add salt, and fry it, and it will become stew. When the yams are boiled, they will gather bowls and be putting the slices into the bowls, five or six in each. And everyone will take his bowl. If three people are going to gather and eat together, they will put about fifteen or twenty slices in the bowl. And they will eat it along with the stew. And such food, we call it *nyuli*, yam, or *nyuduyrili*, boiled yams. Ashantis call it *ampashe* or *ampesie*, and Hausas call it *busa*, and some Dagbamba also call it *ampashe*. When you eat it, you will be drinking water until the sun falls.

And look again, this same yam, that is not all its work. The one who wants will make a fire, and he will take the yam and put it on the fire. He has not peeled it. The fire will eat and burn it, and he will take a knife and peel all the dirt away, and he will take a knife and divide it. We call it *nyusherli*, roasted yam. And again, they can fry yams. They peel the yam and cut it into pieces, and put it inside oil on fire, and they put pepper and salt. We call it *nyuchimda*, fried yams, and Hausas call it *dundunkolo*. When you eat it, you will see its sweetness. And all this is the work of yams. And there is another work of yams we call *nyugatili*. They just boil the yams, remove them from the pot, and spread them in a pan to cool a bit. Then they will take their hands and squeeze all the yams. Then they get pepper and salt and sprinkle them on the yams and mix it. If you like, you can take oil and spread on it, but if you are someone who doesn't like oil, you can eat it like that.

And again, there is another one we call *poggo*. If they are going to make it, we say they are going to beat *poggo*. Whether they boil the yams or roast them, it doesn't matter. If they roast the yams, they will use a knife to clean all the outside, and they will cut the yams into slice and let it cool. They will put it into *laa*, the clay bowl, and they will take a small stirring stick we call *sayvuyli* and break the yams. And they will add salt, and they will use their hands to squeeze it and mix it, and it will look like flour. There is someone who will use groundnuts to make it, and he will let them fry groundnuts and pound them in a mortar and mix inside the yams. There is someone who will use sesame and mix it with pepper and salt inside. That is *poggo*. You eat it just like rice: you can take your hand and collect it and squeeze it into a ball, or you can just take it straight into your mouth. It is another work of yams, leaving *nyugatili* aside, and fried yams, and roasted yams, and boiled yams, and mashed yams, and *fufu*. And that is why I told you that you cannot compare the work of yams to anything in this Dagbon. Even if you want food fast, you can just cut the yams and boil them, and you will just eat them with salt and pepper. And so yams do a lot of work in Dagbon here.

As you have farmed yams and removed them, you will harvest other crops on your farm. I have told you that Dagbamba women don't farm, but truly, they have some work when we harvest corn, guinea corn, and millet. Our Dagbamba women do many works, and truly, we take our women because of cooking, but if they were only standing for cooking, you would not be seeing so many women in the market. And so, it is also these women who go with us to the farm when we harvest corn, guinea corn, and millet. It is the women who cut it and bring it home. And even these beans and bambara beans, we pick them with women.

When the harvesting time comes, if it is corn, you go to the farm with the women. Everyone will be holding his or her basket. You will be picking the corn and putting into the baskets, and you will bring the baskets under a tree. If your women and your young men are there, if you are about ten, four people will sit under the tree and peel the corn, and as you bring the corn and put it down, they will be peeling it. If they harvest the corn and finish peeling it, they will carry the corn home. If the corn is plenty, and it is that you cannot use one day to peel it and carry it home, if you have the means, you will find a tractor or a truck to carry it home for you. As they have carried the corn home, you will give the corn to these women, and in the night, after they finish eating and they are sitting in the compound, they will be peeling it and removing the kernels. They will gather children around them, and they will be singing. Formerly and even up till now, this is how they sit and remove the kernels. But some people put the corn down and get sticks and remove all the kernels. When they have removed all the kernels from the corn cobs, they will put the corn into bags. And this is the work women do on the part of farming corn.

If it is guinea corn, when it is time for cutting it, every woman will come out with her knife. And the young boys too will come out. When guinea corn grows and it is ready, it is very tall, and it will be standing up in the farm. The young boys will go and take their legs and push the guinea corn down. Then the women will come, and each will take one line of the guinea corn. If they are ten, they will start from the same side, and each will take a line. Everyone has her basket. They will be cutting the guinea corn and putting it inside the baskets. If the farm is far, the householder will cut sticks and fix them into the ground and put leaves on top. Any women whose basket is full will take it to that place, and the householder will be collecting the guinea corn and pouring it on top of the leaves. And when they finish, they will carry it home. But if the farm is not far, as they are cutting it, they carry it home. And this is how the women will help you until you finish harvesting the guinea corn.

If it is millet, its work is difficult. You will get a place and you will dig the ground and make a large area. The women will collect cow feces or animal feces and smash it, and they will sweep the area where you dug and take the cow feces and spread it and smear it on the ground. In about two days, it will dry and become hard. Then the women will cut the millet. When they finish, you will get sticks for them. If they are ten women, or six, or four, they are going to beat all the millet, and it is not one day that they are going to beat it. If they wake up in the morning, they will have some work before they come to the farm, and if they come, say, by ten o'clock, then going to three o'clock they will come home again.

What they beat, they will collect and put down. As they are coming, and as the area where they smeared the animal feces is large, when they come they will be putting the millet on the part which is smooth and they will be beating it. This is how they are going to beat all the millet. And they will find a day, and they will come and sieve all of it and put it into bags. And then they will carry it home. And this is how the women help us in our farming, on the part of millet.

Sometimes they will beat millet like that and it will be, let's say, about ten bags. Or if it is corn, it is ten bags. If the women you have are about four, when they help you like that and come home, you will take two bags of millet or two bags of corn and give it to the four women. If they are going to sell it, it is up to them. If they are going to put it down and sell it sometime later, it is up to them. But as for money, you don't pay them. If they say, "Take it and get money for us," then you will ask them, "Have you gone to the market to ask for its price? Or are you just saying I should get money for you?" If your wives fear shame, they will say, "Whatever you have, give us." Then you will give them. And if they will sell it themselves, then you don't care, and your hand will not be in it again.

As I have told you that our Dagbamba women don't farm, truly, sometimes they even help us when we are sowing. If your wives love you, they will follow you to the farm. And if you don't have a wife, if you have a girl friend, she will follow you. If you are going to the farm, she is even the one who will come out first. You know how girl friends are: if you are entering a hole, she is following you. She doesn't even know that she is in the farm doing work. When she is with you in the farm, she thinks she is in the town. She is farming hard work, and it is sweet for her. And so having a girl friend is sweeter than having a wife, and I think that it is the same with you people. Every day you are with your wife, and when you are with someone every day, even if she is a witch who catches people, you won't fear her. But your girl friend is not always with you, and that is how the friendship is and it is sweet. But if you have wives and you have a girl friend outside, then you cannot go behind your wives and let your girl friend help you in the farm. If not that, they cannot know of her and agree that she will be following you. They know that they are suffering with their work in the house, and she is only going to enjoy the sweetness of the friendship, and they will not agree to that. But if they know of her and she has one mouth with them, then your girl friend can sometimes come to help you in the farm.

And there some women you can have in your house. When it is time for harvesting, someone will tell you that she cannot leave what she is doing and go to the farm. Maybe she is trading. She will tell you that what you are going to give her if she comes to the farm, if she is in the house, she will get more than that

before you come home. The woman who doesn't want to help you is the one who says that. If you like her, and you know that the work she is doing will also help you, you will not argue. Or sometimes there is a woman you like, if you have one mouth with her, she can say that, because someone might like his wife and not want her to go to the bush. Such a woman can say that. And there can be a woman who will not want to help her husband, and she will say that she won't help him. If you have such a woman and she tells you this and you agree, then you are a useless man. But if you are not useless, you will tell her, "If I come back from the farm and I meet you in the house here, then you are mine." At that time, if she hears the truth, she will follow you to the farm. But if she doesn't hear the truth, she won't go. Before you come back, she will collect her things and go home, and you will leave her talk for her. And so the work our women do on the part of farming, it can sometimes bring quarrels between a man and his wife. But I can say that our women help us a lot. And so this is how we work with our women in our farming. And tomorrow I will tell you more about our women and how they cook, and how I have showed you the work of yams, I will show you the works that all these other crops do for us in Dagbon here.